



Student Learning Through Wisconsin School Libraries: Key Study Findings

Study Reveals School Media Programs Contribute To Student Academic Success

The study of Wisconsin school library media programs, commissioned by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and completed in 2006, has provided insights into how school library media programs and library media specialists contribute to student success.

The purpose of the study was to examine the leadership and instructional roles of Wisconsin public school library media specialists required for a quality school library media program and the direct relationship with and impact on student achievement and learning across all grade levels.

According to statistical analysis, higher achievement on WKCE is correlated with:

- High staffing levels,
- More time spent on instructionally-related student and teacher activities,
- Larger and more current collections,
- Greater amounts of technology resources and access to computers,

- Full-time certified library media specialists, and
- Longer hours of operation.

The evidence produced by this study indicates that Wisconsin school libraries contribute measurably to the academic achievement of students as reflected by their test scores. At all grade levels, test scores were higher:

- Where school libraries had full-time certified library media specialists and library aides,
- Where access to school libraries is available before, during and after the school day,
- Where school library media specialists spend more time collaboratively planning and teaching with classroom teachers,
- Where educational technology is more widely available to augment the local collection and extend access to online resources throughout the school and beyond, and
- Where school libraries are better funded to provide larger, more current collections and technology resources.



Key Findings from Wisconsin Study Point Way to Developing Quality School Library Media Programs



Key Finding 1

Schools with full-time certified library media specialists and full-time library aides have higher performance on the WKCE.

The level of staffing in library media centers provides the core for services and instructional programs. Effective library media programs require a combination of certified professional teacher-librarians and library aides. The study revealed significant gaps between

recommended staffing levels defined by DPI and actual staffing levels in school districts. Absence of certified teacher-librarians or an insufficient number of aides significantly curtails the range and type of services and programs that can be provided.



Key Finding 2

Schools where the library media specialist spends more time on instructionally-related student

and teacher activities have higher WKCE scores.

Collaborative planning of lessons between teachers and library media specialists is one of the proven hallmarks of an effective and quality library media program. The key to the instructional contributions made by library media specialists lies in their knowledge of the curriculum and instructional practices. Library media specialists not only help teachers make their curriculum

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more resource-rich, but help them revise existing units and develop new innovative units. The results of these efforts enhance the curriculum, refresh teachers, raise expectations and increase student academic achievement.



Key Finding 3

Schools with greater library media program resources for collections and technology have higher performance on the WKCE.

At all grade levels, the school library media programs with full-time certified and support staff had larger print and electronic collections, a greater amount and a wider range of technology, higher levels of library media center and resource use, and more time devoted to instructional and leadership activities. While socioeconomic and school variables explain a large portion of the



variance in WKCE performance at all educational levels, library media program variables explain a significant portion of that variance. In fact, at the high school level the impact of a quality library media program was almost 7 percentage points greater than the impact of socioeconomic variables.



Key Finding 4

Teachers who aligned WMAS for Information and Technology Literacy to their lessons found school library media programs more helpful to student performance.

Schools that have aligned and integrated the Information and Technology Literacy Standards (ITLS) with content standards and lessons are able to provide instruction that makes content more relevant and exposes students to resources beyond just the teacher or textbook. The

information and literacy skills and the knowledge students obtain through work in the library facilitates students' school work and assignments, thus improving academic achievement.



Key Finding 5

Library media specialists help students acquire unique skills not taught in the classroom and information and technology skills essential for students in the 21st century.

Survey data reports that the information technology tools that school libraries provide transform the search, identification, access, retrieval and information evaluation process as well as the format that students use to communicate data and information. Furthermore, school libraries help students become proficient in the use of technology hardware, thereby imbuing them with skills and competencies necessary for success in the 21st century economy.

Student Learning Through Wisconsin School Libraries: Facts, Figures & Methodology

- *Survey of library media specialists, teachers and students, Spring 2005*
- *Case studies of best practice programs, Fall 2005*
- *Data collected from 855 library media specialists for 1,043 school library media programs*
- *Quantitative data collected on library media program structure, resources and operations*
- *Qualitative data collected from 51 randomly selected elementary, middle and high schools; 107 teachers and 3,957 students on benefits received from library media programs*
- *WINSS school and student data for responding school libraries extracted and analyzed*
- *Statistical analysis compared school library and academic achievement indicators: 3rd - 11th grade WKCE reading and language arts scores and 11th grade ACT scores*
- *Test performance was compared for schools that were stronger and weaker on each library variable with school and community socioeconomic variables taken into account*
- *Study is the 16th state school library impact study and it supports the findings from previous studies.*

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